

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

CR No. 2:23-cr-00619-FLA

Plaintiff,

I N F O R M A T I O N

v.

[18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2): Making
False Statements]

COLIN GILBERT,

Defendant.

The United States Attorney charges:

[18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2)]

A. THE MANZANITA BAND OF THE KUMEYAAY NATION

At times relevant to this Information:

1. The Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation was a federally recognized tribe ("Manzanita Tribe").

2. The reservation for the Manzanita Tribe ("Manzanita Reservation") was located in southeastern San Diego County, California.

3. In 2012, Chief A, who was not a member of the Manzanita Tribe, founded the Manzanita Tribal Police Department ("Manzanita PD") and thereafter served as its Chief of Police until 2018, when he

1 stepped down in title only. Chief A was replaced by Chief B as Chief
2 of Police, who served from 2018 to 2020.

3 4. In February 2020, the Manzanita Tribe terminated the
4 Manzanita PD and its relationship with Chief A and Chief B.

5 B. THE BADGES-FOR-MONEY SCHEME

6 At times relevant to this Information:

7 5. Beginning in or around 2016, Chief A and other members of
8 the Manzanita PD ("recruiters"), including defendant GILBERT, began
9 to solicit wealthy individuals in the Los Angeles area to become
10 members of the Manzanita PD. Chief A, defendant GILBERT, and other
11 recruiters would refer to these wealthy individuals as the "VIP
12 Group," the "ghostriders," or the "Admin Bureau." Typically, these
13 individuals were asked to make a large payment, ranging from \$5,000
14 to \$100,000 and sometimes styled as a "donation," in exchange for
15 membership in the Manzanita PD. The individuals who made the
16 payments believed that a Manzanita PD badge could grant the holder
17 privileges in connection with the purchase and carrying of firearms,
18 including the ability to carry concealed firearms in California and
19 elsewhere.

20 6. Members of the VIP Group were not expected to perform
21 any law enforcement services for the Manzanita PD, and many never
22 visited the Manzanita Reservation at all. To further conceal the
23 scheme, Chief A, defendant GILBERT, and other recruiters would
24 sometimes ask the VIP Group to enroll in courses offered by the
25 California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training
26 ("POST").

27 7. Chief A, defendant GILBERT, and others set up an office
28 space for the Manzanita PD in an office building in El Segundo,

1 California, in Los Angeles County, within the Central District of
2 California, which was approximately 177 miles and a several hour
3 drive to the Manzanita Reservation in San Diego County. The office
4 space was located inside the space used by a limousine and car
5 service company. Neither the office space nor the limousine and car
6 service company had any affiliation with or relationship to the
7 Manzanita Tribe.

8 8. At no time was any member of the Manzanita PD also a member
9 of the Manzanita Tribe. At no time was the Manzanita PD recognized
10 by the Bureau of Indian Affairs ("BIA") or the State of California as
11 a cross-deputized police department with federal or state law
12 enforcement authority. At no time did members of the Manzanita PD
13 have the authority to identify themselves as either federal law
14 enforcement officers, state law enforcement officers, or peace
15 officers, and at no time did the Manzanita PD have the authority to
16 engage in any law enforcement activities off the reservation.

17 9. Chief A, defendant GILBERT, and others issued badges and
18 credentials reflecting membership to the Manzanita PD. Most members
19 of the Manzanita PD, including defendant GILBERT, lived in the Los
20 Angeles area, hours away from the Manzanita Reservation. Many
21 members of the Manzanita PD, including defendant GILBERT, sought to
22 avail themselves of privileges available to federal and state law
23 enforcement officers while off the reservation, including using
24 Manzanita PD credentials to acquire firearms and conceal carry
25 firearms.

26 //

27 //

1 C. GILBERT ARRANGED FOR B.D. TO RECEIVE MANZANITA PD CREDENTIALS

2 At times relevant to this Information:

3 10. Prior to August 14, 2019, defendant GILBERT arranged for
4 B.D. to acquire Manzanita PD credentials. Defendant GILBERT believed
5 B.D. to be a wealthy individual with no prior law enforcement
6 experience or training, but, unbeknownst to defendant GILBERT, B.D.
7 was actually an undercover agent working with law enforcement.

8 11. On or about August 14, 2019, B.D. met with Chief B and
9 defendant GILBERT. At defendant GILBERT's direction, B.D. handed
10 Chief B a check for \$5,000 made out to the Manzanita Tribal Police
11 Foundation, and Chief B handed B.D. Manzanita PD credentials
12 reflecting B.D.'s name and photograph. The credentials identified
13 B.D. as a "police officer" for the Manzanita PD and referred to him
14 as a "duly appointed and certified tribal law enforcement officer."
15 The credentials also stated "CCW authorized," which purported to
16 assert that B.D. was authorized to carry a concealed weapon.

17 12. Prior to August 14, 2019, as defendant GILBERT then knew,
18 B.D. had not completed any training courses with California POST.

19 13. On or about November 14, 2019, defendant GILBERT falsely
20 told the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") that B.D. had not
21 received any Manzanita PD credentials, when, as defendant GILBERT
22 then knew, B.D. had already been given his credentials.

23 14. On or about November 17, 2019, defendant GILBERT called
24 B.D. and asked B.D. to return his Manzanita PD credentials.
25 Defendant GILBERT explained that there was a federal investigation
26 and that defendant GILBERT wanted to be able to represent to the FBI
27 that "[B.D.] does not have his credentials. That's what I wanna be
28 able to say. As opposed to saying well he has his credentials and

1 he's promised not to use them." Defendant GILBERT then asked B.D. to
2 either ship his credentials back to him or set them aside until
3 defendant GILBERT could retrieve them. Defendant GILBERT also
4 instructed B.D. that if anyone called to ask about the Manzanita PD,
5 B.D. should falsely represent that B.D. did not "have an ID." B.D.
6 asked, "so I'll never make mention of the ID, like basically that
7 didn't happen, right?" Defendant GILBERT replied, "Yeah."

8 D. THE FALSE STATEMENTS

9 15. On or about November 14, 2019, in Los Angeles County,
10 within the Central District of California, in a matter within the
11 jurisdiction of the executive branch of the government of the United
12 States, namely, the FBI, defendant GILBERT knowingly and willfully
13 made materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and
14 representations to the FBI knowing that such statements and
15 representations were untrue, specifically, that B.D. did not have
16 Manzanita PD credentials and would not receive Manzanita PD
17 credentials until after completing a specific training class, when,
18 as defendant GILBERT then knew, B.D. had in fact received his

19 //

20 //

21

22

23

24

25

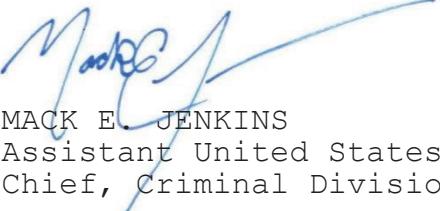
26

27

28

1 Manzanita PD credentials on or about August 14, 2019, without having
2 completed the specific training class.

3
4 E. MARTIN ESTRADA
5 United States Attorney

6 
7 MACK E. JENKINS
8 Assistant United States Attorney
9 Chief, Criminal Division

10
11 LINDSEY GREER DOTSON
12 Assistant United States Attorney
13 Chief, Public Corruption and
14 Civil Rights Section

15 CASSIE D. PALMER
16 Assistant United States Attorney
17 Deputy Chief, Public Corruption
18 and Civil Rights Section

19 FRANCES S. LEWIS
20 Assistant United States Attorney
21 Public Corruption and Civil
22 Rights Section